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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 001324

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG (LAWRENCE) AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [TS](#)

SUBJECT: STATUS OF REQUEST FOR SOFA IN TUNISIA

REF: SECSTATE 85939

Classified By: Charg d'Affaires David Ballard; reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

1. (C) We have no Status of Forces Agreement currently with the GOT. In connection with training exercise Flintlock, we have signed an MOA (administrative agreement) that is valid for the duration of the exercise (June 3-17, 2005). We have a waiver from EUCOM for the Tunisia portion of Flintlock. The lack of a SOFA or verbal assurances did not appear to hinder the conduct of the exercise.

2. (C) Embassy Tunis has made a formal request at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Presidential levels (by the Ambassador and by diplomatic note) for both exercise-specific SOFAs (now OBE relative to Flintlock) and a permanent SOFA. Despite assurances June 1 from the Presidency that we would have an answer in "a few days," we still do not have a response. The DCM has raised the request and lack of response almost daily at the MFA Director General level since June 1, either in person or telephonically, without result.

3. (C) Comment: While our mil-mil relationship with Tunisia remains strong, we should expect the GOT to move very slowly and deliberately on this issue; officials likely do not make large distinctions between oral assurances, exercise specific- and permanent SOFAs. Embassy Tunis will continue to engage appropriate officials on concluding a permanent SOFA.
BALLARD